Elite Insider Circle
Monthly Handicap Improver
June 2015

Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is **Jaacob Bowden**.

To **recap last month**, our **equipment expert Tom Wishon** wrote about **whether or not iron technology is improving or if the manufacturers are making lofts lower.**

For traditional **forged irons, they really are no better than designs** from 10 to 20 years ago. Rather, extra distance has been yielded due to the iron **lofts being strengthened by about 2 full clubs** since the 1980s. For example, this means that an old 6-iron is today's 8-iron from a loft standpoint.

Although **game improvement irons also have stronger lofts**, things like **thin high COR faces, variable face thickness**, etc have made game improvement irons **better than ever**.

Nutrition expert Adam Young wrote about **inflammatory foods, stress**, and how you could **lose weight on a Twinkie diet** (yes, really!).

Putting expert Geoff Mangum wrote a critical piece about how so-called **"true roll" is an urban myth.**

He said that after about 2-3 inches of ball-grass interaction, the "worst" stroke for so-called true roll is the same as the "best" stroke. So as long as you **don't use putters or strokes that launch balls** in to the air, you can forget "true roll".

We also had a **Long Drive Q&A with Ryan Reisbeck.** Last month, Ryan **won the 2015 Mutant Golf Long Drive Championship**…and he has since **won again** in long drive at the **Bullard Classic**!

Ryan has achieved a **ball speed of 226.7 mph** in the 2014 RE/MAX World Long Drive Championships and he has an **equipment setup that helps optimize his driving distance**. He uses an **Orange Whip** to help with his timing and help with his flexibility. Ryan also **spends time in the gym** working on core work and his flexibility.

To hit the ball farther, **Ryan recommends practicing swinging fast** (which I agree is one of the keys to swing speed training).

This month, here's what's coming up for you.

- **The fast-swinging and long-hitting Houston Hair** will be our **Long Drive Q&A.**
- **Tom Wishon** will answer the question of **whether steel or graphite shafts are better for your irons.**
- I'm going to go over the **importance** of having your **lie angles checked.**
- I will answer Monthly Handicap Improver **member questions**.

I was also asked to comment about Tiger and what is going on with him after **recently shooting 85** at The Memorial in Ohio…his highest round as a professional. However, **my thoughts** about that **haven't really changed since I wrote about Tiger** more extensively back in **December 2014 in the Monthly Handicap Improver.**

To briefly reiterate, I think **the first thing that has to get fixed is internal**. He can say that he wants something on the surface, but if that's not in alignment with what's going on under the hood, there's no amount of swing changes or technical

work that will get him back to where he was or even better. So first things first, that's where I would start.

From a **training standpoint**, an **analysis of his physical fitness routine** seems necessary. There's no reason he couldn't **safely be swinging in the mid 120s or even 130s with some proper swing speed training**.

Technically speaking, Tiger **stands a bit wide** with the driver, which puts him at risk for injury. To further protect from injury, his **front foot could be opened up** more at address. To help with his accuracy (especially the driver), I would **change up his grip and hand action to something that is easier** to do for regular golf. Club rotation is a commonly taught thing in golf…and I don't really understand why because it's extremely difficult to do.

I would **consider modeling his swing after Ryan Palmer**. Ryan does all the things I mentioned above well. There's more to golf and winning than the full swing, but I **can't think of anyone currently on tour who has a more safe and low maintenance swing** than Ryan.

Also, as part of your Monthly Handicap Improver Insider Circle, **we've included a CD of my audio interview with…Dean Snell.**

Dean is a **golf ball designer** and among other things he **designed or co-designed the Titleist Pro V1, Titleist Professional, TP Tour Preferred, TP Tour Preferred X**...so an impressive share of all the balls that have been played and won on tour over the last 15 years or so.

We talk about **technology**, **how it developed** over the years, **how John Daly, Justin Rose and Sergio Garcia were** to work with, what he could transfer from designing the F-16 fighter plane heads up display to **building the entire TaylorMade-Adidas ball department**, and the **best way he recommends to be fit for a golf ball.**

We hope you enjoy it!

Let's get started.

Long Drive Q&A with Houston Hair

Age: 32
Height: 6'4”
Weight: 230 lbs

Driver Specs: 5* F6
XPHLEXXX busa shaft

Sponsors:

Krank Golf, XPHLEXXX, prokjekt.co, 2UNDER, Travis Mathew, TBA

What is your longest drive in competition?

462 yards to lose by one yard. Unofficially the longest ball ever hit to not advance to the next round.

What were the conditions of the drive?

Mesquite, NV! A little down wind and dry.

What are the fastest swing speeds you’ve recorded on a Swing Speed Radar and/or Trackman?

148 maybe

What lead you to choose your particular equipment specifications?

I've been a pro golfer for 12 plus years, I can fit anyone.

Do you favor a particular shot shape to hit it long?

Yeah, the winning shot shape.

Do you use any training aids to work on your speed and power?

Orange Whip Trainer, Draz Athletics WAGs (The Weighted Agility Glove), The Ultimate Swing Trainer (UST)

Do you do any other types of training to drive it further?

Nothing too crazy

Is there any particular bit of advice you would give the regular amateur for him or her to hit the ball longer?

To add 4 yards to your drive, you hit your tee shot 4 steps back and boom you've added that yardage (I'm a funny guy).

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

At the Pacific Power Group Golf website: http://www.p2g2.ca

Are Steel or Graphite Shafts Better for Your Irons?

By Tom Wishon

Almost since the first day graphite shafts were introduced to golfers some 35 years ago, a myth developed which said that graphite shafts were for older, weaker players while steel shafts were better for younger, stronger golfers.

It's pretty obvious that myth has been shot down with respect to drivers and fairway woods. Graphite shafts have owned virtually a 100% share of the market in shaft use for drivers and woods for quite a number of years. In fact, it is all but impossible to find a driver or wood built with a steel shaft.

Why?

Because over the years, golfers have associated graphite shafts with increased distance – and where is distance more of a priority for golfers than with the driver and the fairway woods?

Virtually all graphite shafts for woods are lighter than the majority of steel shafts. Lighter shaft means lighter total weight, which means the golfer can generate a higher club head speed to potentially gain more distance.

But what about the irons?

Still today, steel shafts are installed in no less than 2/3's of all sets of irons sold over the past two decades.

There are several reasons for this.

1) For decades, virtually all tour players have used steel shafts in their irons. Tour use does influence the buying decisions for a lot of golfers.

2) Golfers associate steel shafts with control and accuracy (myth). Where else is control and accuracy a primary goal in the game than with the irons?
3) Graphite iron shafts have been more expensive than steel iron shafts. While golfers were willing to pay a little more for a graphite shaft driver or woods, few were willing to pay more per club for graphite shafts in the irons since sets of irons typically are composed of 6, 7, 8 or more clubs.

But things have changed and golfers who previously were 100% polarized toward steel shafts in the irons now have a far wider range of options in graphite iron shafts.

First of all, in the past two years, graphite has begun to find its way into the irons played by more tour players than ever before. While by no means is the graphite iron shaft market share on tour much more than 10% versus steel at 90%, but there are definitely more sets of graphite iron shafts in play on tour than ever before. The reason is because shaft makers can create graphite iron shaft designs that offer everything in terms of performance that tour players demand in their iron shafts.

Most tour players have always preferred heavier weight iron shafts to increase the total weight of the clubs to match with their higher swing speeds and higher levels of swing aggressiveness. Graphite iron shafts are available which weigh as much as the typical 120-130 gram weight of steel iron shafts preferred by most tour players. In addition, more options are available in graphite iron shafts designed with a stiffer tip section to match to the typical tour player's very late release at the end of the downswing.

Next, the shaft to shaft production consistency of graphite iron shafts is at a very high level today. Where once graphite shafts were criticized for being less consistent in production quality than steel, that is no longer the case today.

The two biggest reasons that golfers should consider changing from steel to graphite in the irons are: 1) increased distance with a decrease in fatigue from the irons being too heavy for the golfer; 2) reduction in discomfort for golfers with arthritis or who suffer from pain in the hands, wrists, elbows and shoulders.

Changing from a steel iron shaft that most typically weighs 110-130g to graphite iron shafts that weigh from 50g to 80g is a superb way to lower the total weight of the irons to open the door for more distance through a club head speed increase, as well as to reduce fatigue from swinging irons that are too heavy for the golfer's strength and preferred sense of weight feel.

In addition, graphite acts as a much better vibration dampening material than steel. While it is not a 100% cure for all golfers, many golfers with joint discomfort do find the impact vibration from hitting shots with graphite shaft irons is enough less than steel that they can hit balls and play 18 holes with a reduction in their joint discomfort.

Finally, sets of irons made with graphite shafts are no longer significantly more expensive than sets made with steel shafts. There are steel iron shafts today that are significantly more expensive than graphite! Typical retail pricing for graphite shafted sets of irons is just not that much more expensive than a set of irons built with steel shafts.

When considering the move from steel to graphite in the irons, keep these fitting points in mind:

- The slower the iron swing speed, the smoother the swing tempo, and the less aggressive the downswing move at the ball, the lighter the weight of the graphite iron shaft should be for the golfer.

    - Golfers with a middle iron swing speed under 60mph should consider a 65g or lighter graphite iron shaft.
    - Golfers with mid iron speed from 65 to 75mph should think about graphite iron shafts of 65 to 80g in weight.
    - Players with an iron speed from 75-85 should aim for graphite iron shafts from 75 to 90g.
    - Those above 85mph would be better off with a graphite iron shaft of 85 to 100g in weight.

- The later the golfer unhinges the wrist cock in the downswing, and the more aggressive the downswing tempo, the stiffer the tip section of the shaft should be to match their swing.

    Conversely the earlier the golfer unhinges the wrist cock in the downswing, and the more smooth and passive the downswing tempo, the more flexible the tip section of the shaft should be to match their swing. Graphite iron shafts come in a wide variety of tip section stiffness design. Work with a good, experienced club fitter to have your release best matched to the tip section design of the shaft.

As always, to find a good club fitter near you, please refer to the following links:

The AGCP (Association of Golf Clubfitting Professionals):

http://www.agcpgolf.com/locator/

The ICG (International Clubmakers' Guild):

http://www.clubmakersguild.com/index.php/membership-directory/guild-google-map

The TWGT Clubmaker Locator: http://wishongolf.com/find-a-clubfitter/

Thanks for your interest and the best wishes to you as always in this great game.

The Importance of Lie Angles

By Jaacob Bowden

I wanted to briefly go over the importance of having your lie angles checked and adjusted.

The lie angle is the difference between the angle of the shaft relative to the center sole of the club.

Lie angles that are too upright will point left (for a right-hander) of the target…even when the leading edge of the club face looks like it's pointing at the target from the top view.

Lie angles that are too flat will point to the right of the target.

So it's important to have them fit to your golf swing…and checked periodically because they can sometimes drift, shift, or get bent out of place. A seasonal check with a club fitter is sufficient for most people. Professionals or golfers who play a lot or hit tons of balls might want to get them checked in the tour van once a month.

Lately I've been dusting off my golf clubs and have been starting to get out to play or practice once or twice a week to help get ready for British Open qualifying outside London on June 22nd. As I've been playing, I felt like I was swinging consistently but for some reason I kept missing my targets with certain clubs. Since it didn't seem to be a swing issue, I thought I should get the lie angles checked on my irons since I hadn't done it for awhile.

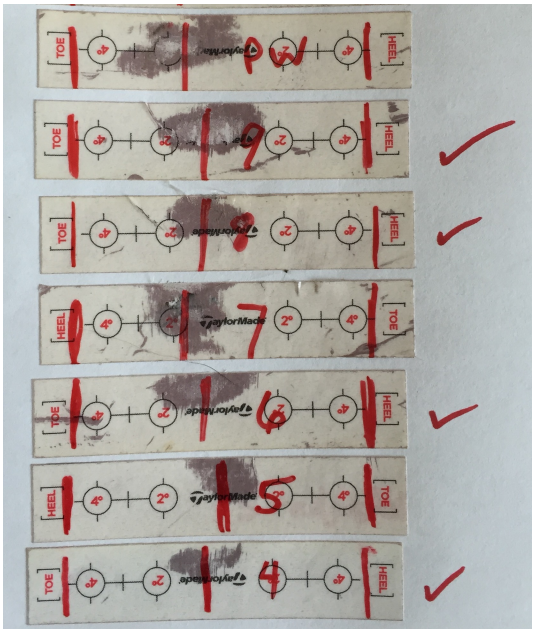
There are a number of ways to get a sense of whether they are flat, upright, or spot on.

Once way is to hit a bunch of balls with each iron off a grass driving range and see whether the dirt line goes straight across the club face or if it's tilted.

Another way is to draw a line with a marker on the ball, position the ball with the line vertically, hit the ball with your club, and then look whether the line is straight up the club face or if it's tilted either one way. Usually the marker wipes off but you might put some tape on the club face to keep it clean from the marker.

In this particular case, I decided to check with a lie board. A lie board is a hard rectangular piece of plastic that's roughly 1 foot across and 2 feet long. You put

some tape on the bottom of your iron, hit a ball off the lie board, and then see whether the skuff mark on the tape from hitting the lie board is centered or favoring one side or the other.



Here are the results of hitting several shots with each iron.

The straight red lines on the left and right are markings I made to indicate how the tape was aligned on the bottom of the club relative to the groove markings on the club face.

The black marks are the scuff marks from each hit on the lie board.

The red line on the black skuff marks from the lie board are roughly the center of the black marks.

Ideally I'd want all the middle red lines or scuff marks to line up straight with one another. However, as you can see here that is not the case.

For me, I was hitting my 4-iron, 6-iron, 8-iron, and 9-iron all straight. That's why the check marks are on the right of the tape stickers. Were these to be the only stickers in the photo, interestingly these would all line up similarly.

Not surprisingly the "flat" 5-iron was dispersing to the right and the "upright" 7-iron and PW were dispersing left.

So I bent the 5-iron more upright and the 7-iron and PW more flat…and then re-tested.

Here are the new markings.

Now you can see the scuff marks are all more or less lined up relative to the center of the grooves.

In the very next round, I went out and

played the same as before but shot 4 strokes better…in this case all from hitting my irons closer to the flag which lead to less bogey's, more pars, and more birdies.

Your Questions Answered

Member Question:

Hi Jaacob,

Tomorrow is my next day of isometric band training. I started with 21 lbs of resistance and that seem like a good workout for me.

What increment should I try to go up each session?

I was thinking of trying to move up to 23 for next session. Is that too small an increase?

What are your suggestions?

Thanks,

Matt S, Member, Ohio

Jaacob's Answer:

It will vary from workout to workout. Some of them it will be tough to move up at all. Others you can move up a little. Still others might surprise you and you'll move up a lot. Just take it workout by workout.

In all cases, the point is to try to move up however much you can whenever you can because by the end of the month we want your downswing muscles to improve on strength as much as possible. This combined with the work on practicing swinging fast should give you a nice boost in speed.

Member Question:

Hi Jaacob,

I noticed that when I tee the ball higher and try to hit up on the ball on my simulator that the rotation goes way down. When I hit down or square the rotation is around 3000 rpm, but when I hit up on the ball the rotation goes to 2000 some times less. I have been told that with 2000 rpm's or there about the wind coming at the ball has much less effect.

We play in an environment where we have 20/25 mph of head wind on several tee shots. Before I was teeing the ball down to try to hit a low shot but with probably lots of RPM. Yesterday I teed it up and hit it farther in about the same wind.

Dave

Jaacob's Answer:

It's possible that your contact point might be changing when you are changing your angle of attack. Generally, balls hit lower on the face spin more and balls hit higher on the face spin less. So you might want to check that out. You can do that by simply picking up some Dr. Scholl's Odor X Foot Powder Spray and spraying a little of it on your driver face (don't worry, it wipes off easily with a towel). Using the spray, you can see your contact point without having to use any fancy or expensive technology.

You might also be changing something else about your swing because changing angle of attack doesn't change the spin in and of itself. Rather, it just raises or lowers the launch angle.

At your approximate swing speed of 91.5 mph, I would normally target getting you to 13-16 degree launch and 2000-2600 rpm spin.

As a general rule of thumb with wind, things like ball speed, launch angle, and spin rate don't really change that much. However, head winds cause the ball to lift more than normal. This causes a higher peak height as well as a steeper landing angle, which can cause less roll out. Conversely, tail winds knock the ball's peak height down and also shallow out the landing angle.

At this point, at your speed, my thinking is for head winds I would want you to launch it towards the 13 degree and 2000 end. For tail winds, I would say the 16 and 2600 would be more optimal for you for distance. Although, as long as you are in those windows for launch and spin, you'll basically be okay. If you're in those windows and you don't want to adjust for consistency-sake, that's fine.

It's also conceivable that when you tee the ball down, you are launching it lower than 13. But in either case, 3000 seems a bit much and would hurt distance in either case.

Member Question:

Hi Jaacob,

Have you ever experimented with which arm controls the golf swing?

I've tried some things and just wanted to get your thoughts.

Until last year, I've always been a left arm swinger, i.e. the backswing and downswing are controlled by the left arm and the right arm was just along for the ride. This approach worked well at times but driver heel shots and too much lag (deloft) were somewhat frequent issues.

Last year I tried an opposite, right arm control, swing where the left arm was along for the ride. This swing was based mostly on Count Yogi's swing. This right arm swing corrected the issues with the left arm swing. I was getting a much better launch and getting the middle of the face a lot. However, I noticed I lost some swing speed by only using the right arm. It was ok since I was hitting it more solid but I wanted to see if I could alternate arm control to get the best of both.

I started watching different pro swings in slow motion on YouTube to try to see examples of this alternating approach. For example, Fred Couples appears to take away the club with the left arm, then near the top relaxes the left arm/shoulder and pulls the club back more with the right arm. He might be then switching to left control on downswing to right hip level when he relaxes the left arm and throw releases the club with his right arm.

Trying to follow this pattern took some time but it eventually felt pretty good. I tried some other patterns that were less complex and last week found a good one for me on the course.

For the driver, I take away the club with the right arm. Then at about right hip level I switch control to the left arm and continue to the top, as I hinge the wrists, I basically unlag and throw the club from top with the right arm. With this driver swing I get a consistent high launch with good speed, maybe a 5-yard fade.

Any thoughts would be good to hear.

Thanks,

Andy H

Jaacob's Answer

Yes, I have tried both right and left sided control. For me personally, when I swing right-handed, I get better control and speed with my right side. Interestingly, when I try to swing left-handed, my right side also gets better speed and control, which would be the pull side rather than the push side.

I don't think there's a universal correct answer here as far as which side works better. Rather I think it's just personal preference.

I would go with something that is the least complex and get's you hitting the ball best. This sounds like once you get to the top, for you this is the right hand. But since it's slower, I would just do some swing speed training for your right side to get it up to speed. For example, working to improve on the speed of your one-handed right-handed swings. Once you get the right side up to the same speed as your left side, you'll get the best of all worlds...solid hits, high launch, and good speed in a way that works well for you personally.

As for your fade, if you like it, I would say stay with it. Having a stock ball flight with a bit of curve is no problem. But if you'd rather be a bit straighter, I would look in to some custom club-fitting options like a driver with a closed face angle or something with more weight in the heel to straighten out the shot.

That's something that pros often do that amateurs don't...fit the equipment to their swing rather than the other way around.

Member of the Month

"Thanks to your swing speed training, I'm not able to match more or less the ball speed of the PGA TOUR with the driver 257 kph (169.7 mph).

Now, I only need to get smart enough to use it on the course. Haha

Thanks buddy!"

–Steve T, 34 years old, 9 handicap, Switzerland

Finishing Up With Fun

Father Norton woke up one Sunday morning. It was an exceptionally beautiful and sunny early spring day, and he decided he just had to play golf.

He called up his associate priest and told him that he was feeling sick and asked him to hold Mass for him that day. As soon as he hung up from talking to him, Father Norton headed for a golf course about 40 miles away. He wanted to make sure that he didn't run into anyone he knew.

After all, everyone else would be in church.

At the course, Father Norton asked to play alone, and as he strolled to the first tee, St. Peter leaned over to the Lord while they were looking down from Heaven and exclaimed, “You're not going to let him get away with this, are you?"

The Lord sighed and responded, “No, I guess not.”

Father Norton teed his ball up and took a mighty swing. The ball came off the face of his driver like a cannon shot, straight and true. His ball landed just short of the green, bounced on it, and then rolled straight into the hole, a 420-yard hole-in-one!

St. Peter was astonished. He looked at the Lord and asked, “How could you let that happen?”

The Lord just smiled and replied, “Who's he going to tell?"

We hope you enjoyed the June 2015 Monthly Handicap Improver…

- Do you have a **golf joke** you want to share with your fellow members?
- Any **other questions or comments**?

Let us know at info@swingmangolf.com with the subject “**FEEDBACK**”!

Have a great month!